

NORRISTOWN MUNICIPALITY
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

DECEMBER 3, 2024

CALL TO ORDER

The Municipal Council Meeting of December 3, 2024 was called to order by Council President, Thomas Lepera, at 6:30 PM in Council Chambers, 235 West Airy Street, Norristown, PA.

There was a Moment of Silence and a Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

The following members were in attendance:

Rebecca Smith
Rashaad Bates
William McCoy
Lauren Hughes
Dustin Queenan
Thomas Lepera

Also present were:

Leonard Lightner, Municipal Administrator; Sean Kilkenny, Municipal Solicitor; Jayne Musonye, Director of Planning and Development; Kathy Pfister, Director of Finance; Amanda Ciarlante, Assistant Finance Director; Keith Gordon, Building & Code Compliance Manager; Thomas O'Donnell, Norristown Fire Chief; Thomas

Odenigbo, Director of Public Works; Lt. Dumas, Norristown Police; Bri'Ana, Director of Recreation; Ted Dymtryk, Pennoni Engineering.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

There was a motion by **Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to approve the Minutes from the November 19, 2024 Council Workshop Meeting. **The motion passed 6-0.**

EXECUTIVE SESSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Council President Lepera announced that Council met in Executive Session prior to tonight's meeting to discuss personnel issues.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councilman Queenan announced there is a Spanish translator available in the rear of the Chambers with headsets.

"Winter Village" at Eisenhower Field on December 7 from 1 pm to 7 pm and December 8 from 1 pm to 6 pm. Vendors and ice skating.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Hassan Tofana – Mr. Tofana said he values giving back during the holidays and he suggested more collection and distribution of toys in Norristown. Council President Lepera said he will connect him with someone who can help fund his project or provide resources. Councilman Queenan said he will talk with him after the meeting.

Cheryl Holmes, Arch Street, Norristown – Ms. Holmes questioned the use of \$11 million that Norristown received before December 2023.

She asked why we don't have a YMCA like other towns. She said we pay taxes and there's nothing to do.

Yvonne Platts, Arch Street – She commended Council for doing their part in helping victims from the Lafayette Street fire. She said she is still concerned with other issues such as engagement with Council and the public with more dialogue and feedback regarding budget, trash, etc. She suggested having public meetings like the Police department or District meetings.

Almyra Taylor, Buttonwood Street – Ms. Taylor was present on behalf of the Bengals football team who are in the Norristown Football League and who made it to the Regional Championships. She said they need \$25,000 to get to Florida for 20 kids and 6 coaches. She asked for help from Council. She said this keeps the kids off the streets.

Each Council member offered money from their Discretionary Funds to support this cause, totaling just under \$19,000.

Perry Thompson – He said he was fined for high grass in the back alley. He said there is trash and a pothole in the alley that isn't being addressed, though.

Heather Lewis, Haws Avenue – She thanked Council and the firefighters for their involvement in the Lafayette Street Fire situation but says there is still lack of transparency and mistrust regarding other issues. She told Council that Yvonne Platts is a member of Peace Ambassadors. She shared that an independent audit assessment was approved by a previous Council before Chief Bailey-Davis was implemented. She said that 97 recommendations were given which Chief Bailey-Davis wanted to address.

Ms. Lewis addressed the residents at the meeting saying they should show up every second and fourth Tuesday of the month to get their concerns heard.

PRESENTATIONS

A presentation by State Representative Greg Scott

The information from his Power Point included his Biography and a Mission Statement which asked, “How do we spend the Government’s Money”?

He said they visited the victims of the pre-Thanksgiving Day fire on Lafayette Street which was led by Fire Chief O’Donnell. He said there were Red Cross volunteers, the Blockson School opened their classrooms, ACLAMO provided coats, Ebernezer Church offered meals, the Blessing Shop provided clothes, the Norristown Hospitality Center provided shuttles.

He continued the presentation highlighting his committees, legislative wins, funding for Norristown schools, programs, developments and infrastructure.

He noted that future projects include the Elmwood Park Recreation Center, the continuation of PennDOT projects such as Main & Markley, Brown and Dekalb Streets and Johnson Highway.

APPOINTMENTS

Resolution 24-109: Request for Council to approve appointments to Boards, Committees and Commissions

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Hughes, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve Resolution 24-109 requesting, per a letter from the Norristown Municipal Waste Authority dated November 19, 2024, to remove Mr. Simpson as a Board member in accordance with Section 5601(f) of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Authorities Act and that Municipal Council appoint a new member to serve the remainder of his term. **The motion passed 6-0.**

MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATOR

Resolution 24-126: request for Municipal Council to authorize the use of ARPA Funds to purchase two (2) vehicles for the Building and Code Department

Mr. Gordon noted that the three (3) new Inspectors require vehicles.

There was **a motion by Council Vice President Queenan, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to approve Resolution 24-126. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Motion to award the contract to RTG Solutions Corporation for the Norristown Recreation Center Roofing and Masonry Work

Ted Dymtryk, Pennoni Engineering, noted that the low bidder was RTG Solutions Corp. He said because the amount was under \$350,000, it will be ARPA funded according to RCO requirements.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve the contract to RTG Solutions Corporation for the Norristown Recreation Center Roofing and Masonry Work. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Motion to award the contract to BRB Contractors for the Roosevelt Field Demolition

Mr. Dymtryk said the metal stadium seating, sheds, fencing, etc. will be removed. He noted it will be ARPA funded according to RCO requirements.

There was **a motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to approve the contract to BRB Contractors for the Roosevelt Field Demolition. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Motion to award the bid to the Lowest Responsible Contractor for the Saw Mill Run Creek Culvert Project – Hoffman Property

Mr. Dymtryk noted this is for the repair of the culvert and any repairs associated with it. He said that the original bid was entered incorrectly so they went to the next lowest bidder which is JPS Construction Company for \$1,119,000. He said that since it is over \$350,000, they will apply for a DCED Grant for \$350,000 and the remainder will be ARPA funded.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve the bid award to JPS Construction Company for the Saw Mill Run Creek Culvert Project. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Motion to approve resignation of Tiffani Hendley, Council Member At-Large

Leonard Lightner, Municipal Administrator, stated that Ms. Hendley's resignation was received on November 19, 2024.

There was a motion by **Councilman Bates**, seconded by **Council Vice President Queenan**, to approve the resignation of Tiffani Hendley. **The motion passed 6-0.**

BUILDINGS & CODE COMPLIANCE

Request to approve HARB COA's

Mr. Gordon noted the addresses for the HARB COA's are:

309 Haws Avenue
1108 Dekalb Street

There was a motion by **Councilman McCoy**, seconded by **Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve the HARB COA's. **The motion passed 6-0.**

FINANCE

Resolution 24-120: 2025-2029 Capital Improvements Plan

Kathy Pfister stated that the 5-Year CIP Program was adopted at the November 19th Council Workshop Meeting. She said the 5-Year total is \$33,965.371 which includes Bonds and Grant Funds for the new Fire Station, totaling \$12 million, ARPA Funds \$10 million and Liquid Fuels \$1 million.

There was a motion by **Councilwoman Smith**, seconded by **Councilman Bates**, to approve Resolution 24-120 approving the Capital Improvements Plan. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 24-121: 2025 Consolidated Fee Schedule

Kathy Pfister noted the changes are for the increase in the Administrative Fee of \$35 to \$50 for Code Compliance; Summer Camp added a non-refundable Registration Fee of \$50 and elimination of the early registration and discount for multiple children. Also, there is no pre-camp due to non-participation.

There was **a motion by Council Vice President Queenan, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to approve Resolution 24-121 adopting the proposed 2025 Consolidated Fee Schedule. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Ordinance 24-07: adopting the FY 2025 Budget and establishing the Real Estate Tax Rate for 2025

Ms. Pfister noted that Council heard the Departmental Proposals and Preliminary Budget Considerations. She said there were three (3) Public Meetings on November 12, 18 and 25 which were advertised on November 9 and promoted on the Municipal's social media. She noted that Council approved the advertisement of the Budget on November 19th in the local paper and the Proposed Budget on November 23rd in the amount of \$43,792,153, including Expenditures and Revenues. She added the Liquid Fuels 2025 Budget is \$944,914 and the 2025 CIP is \$24,496,571.

There was **a motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve Ordinance 24-07 adopting the FY 2025 Budget and increasing the millage rate from 17.25 to 18.25. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 24-122: request for Council to approve policy to authorize and grant the Municipal Administrator and Director of Finance Settlement Authority in certain tax, lien and fee matters

Ms. Pfister noted this is an update to the existing policy to make it more efficient to resolve matters. She noted that currently she and the Municipal Administrator can settle certain tax, lien and fee matters under \$5,000. She said that Stormwater Fees are included in the Resolution and it removes the \$5,000 limit for interest and penalties. She added that the reduction of principle is not permitted in this Resolution so it can eliminate or reduce the penalties.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Hughes, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to approve Resolution 24-122. **The motion passed 6-0.**

PLANNING & MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT

Ordinance 24-05: request adoption of Ordinance 24-05 for the vacating of a portion of Wood Street

Director Musonye noted that the owner wants to subdivide the property and this Ordinance was advertised on November 13 and 20 in the newspaper. She added that the neighbor did not request a Public Hearing.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to advertise Ordinance 24-05 to vacate a portion of Wood Street. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Ordinance 24-06: request adoption of Ordinance 24-06 for the vacation of a portion of Violet Street

Director Musonye noted that Council approved the advertisement of this Ordinance on November 13 and 20. She also stated that the

neighbor had to be notified as to whether they want a Public Hearing. She said there was no request for one.

There was **a motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to adopt Ordinance 24-06 to vacate a portion of Violet Street. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 24-117: authorize the submission of a Grant application to the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) requesting \$1,000,000 Main Street Matters (MSM) in District Development Grants funding for the 1 West Main Street Food and Event Hall Project

Ms. Musonye noted that a Study was submitted with positive feedback and they want to apply for Grants on the Federal, State and County levels. She said that \$6 million is needed for this project.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Hughes, seconded by Councilwoman Smith**, to approve Resolution 24-117 for submission of a DCED Main Street Matters Grant. **The motion passed 6-0.**

POLICE

Resolution 24-123: Motion to approve Handicapped Parking

There was **a motion by Councilman Bates, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to approve Resolution 24-123 to approve Handicapped Parking. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 24-124: motion to approve the Civil Service Resolution for Entry-Level Police Candidates and Certified Eligibility List

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Council Vice President Queenan**, to approve Resolution 24-124 to approve the Civil Service Resolution for entry-level police candidates and certified eligibility list. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Resolution 24-125: Motion for Council to approve Offers of Conditional Employment to four (4) candidates on the Entry-Level Police Officer Eligibility List

Lt. Dumas noted that the Civil Service approved the four (4) names on the Eligibility List to help fill the 11 vacancies. He said they completed the background process and are eligible to fill the vacancies.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Hughes, seconded by Councilman Bates**, to approve Resolution 24-125 to approve Offers of Conditional Employment to four (4) candidates on the Entry-Level Police Officer Eligibility List. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Motion to approve the advertisement of the towing contract RFP

Lieutenant Dumas noted that the RFP will be sent with the increased schedule and Towing changes.

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilman McCoy**, to approve the advertisement of the towing contract RFP. **The motion passed 6-0.**

FIRE

Motion to approve Letter of Intent with DCED

Fire Chief O'Donnell explained that this is for the DCED to evaluate the Norristown Fire Department and provide guidance to facilitate future growth and sustainment of existing services.

There was **a motion by Council Vice President Queenan, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to approve the Letter of Intent with the DCED. **The motion passed 6-0.**

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Quarterly Update to Council from Special Events Coordinator, Tracie Henry

Ms. Henry reported that 750 children were served for “Trunk or Treat.” The Norristown Winter Village will have a heated vendor tent and free skating rink. On Sunday, there is time for NASD students only from 11 to 1 PM.

Monthly updates to Council – presenting Departments – Public Works and Building & Codes

Director Odenigbo presented a Power Point which highlighted what the department is doing now such as a Leaf Collection from October 21st until December 9th. He said this follows the street-sweeping schedule. He said that 128 loads of leaves were collected to date. He added that the Snow Route for 2024-25 has been set. He said there are North, West and East Zones and he said that Public Works supervises all Zones. He noted that banners and lighted snowflakes have been installed.

He continued with the Summary Permit Report and he noted that there was a City Sweep on November 2, 2024.

Code

Keith Gordon, Code Manager, presented Council members with small rubber ducks that he said he gives to customers that come to the department with Code issues.

His Power Point included an Operation Summary Report which showed the figures for Quick Tiks, Proactive Code Violations, Property Transfers and a Permit Summary Report which increased to \$182,062.23 from 2023. He also provided information for the Executive Report from September 2023 until November 2024 which included Community Service, PA BOC Conference, Active Shooter Training, Masonry Training. He introduced two of the new Inspectors – Craig Graham and Marcus Hashim.

He shared that the department was recognized by HUD for the Municipal Lead Safety Ordinance for which they are 61% compliant. He also noted there is an Internal Incentive Program which entails the employee receiving a duck for a nomination from another person and the employee with the most ducks gets a reward.

ADJOURNMENT

There was **a motion by Councilwoman Smith, seconded by Councilwoman Hughes**, to adjourn the Council Meeting. **The motion passed 6-0.**

Respectfully submitted,

Roseann Santangelo
Clerk-of-Council

